PS 3543 .I65 V3

1918

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

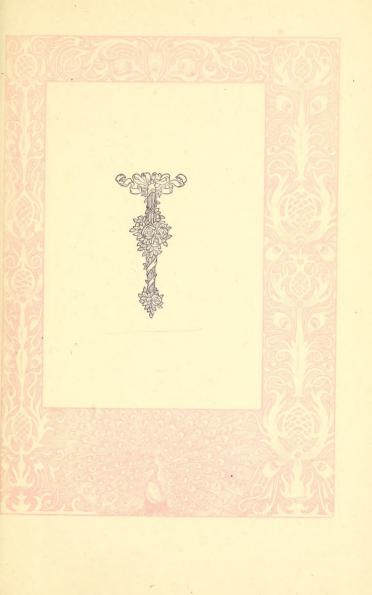


0000270707A









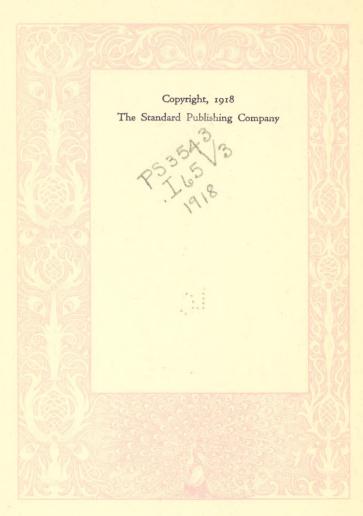


### Vanitas Vanitatis

E. E. VIOLETTE

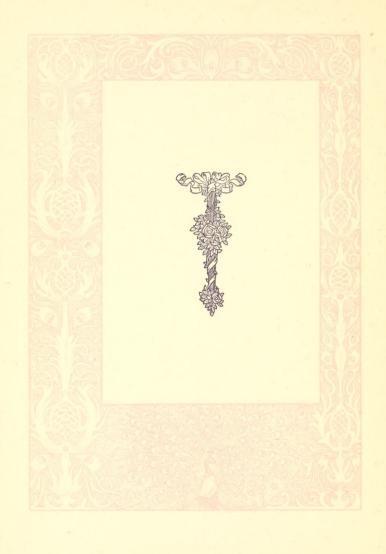


CINCINNATI
THE STANDARD PUBLISHING
COMPANY

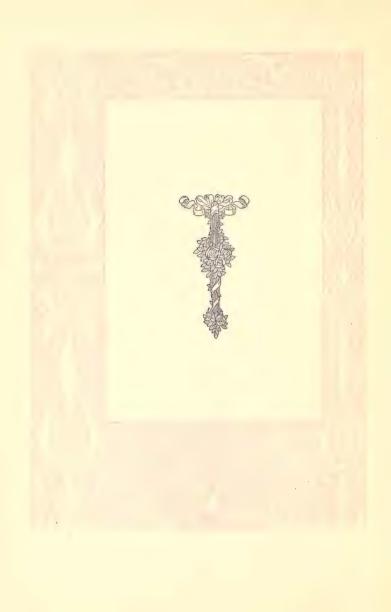


JAN 27 1919

Dedicated to "PEGGY PAGE"



### CANTO I



- The crimson rambler crawls along the walls
- Of the old house at home; and through the halls
- There rings the laughter of a hygone day
- Of youth and pleasure.
  And there comes a lay,

- Borne on the breezes of the passing years,
- Changing the joys of youth to unfeigued tears—
- Tears of regret that ran not right the wrongs,
- Tears of remorse that hush the happy songs

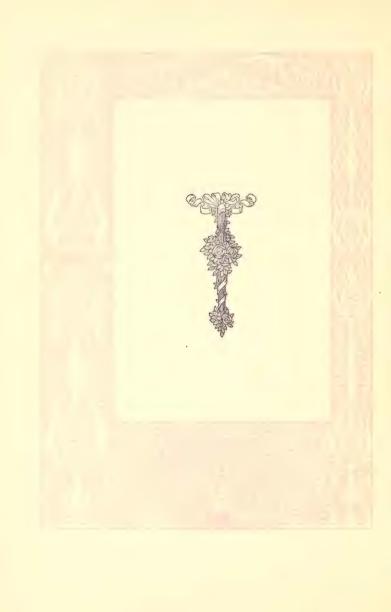
That we might sing to-day if we had known

What youth and pleasure meant. Had we not thrown

Away that golden day of long ago

We might have saved ourselves this deathless woe That brings vain longings for the old roof-tree And clouds our dreams of ideality.

# CANTO II



In life's dream-days the loved ones gathered round

The old hearthstone; and in those days we found

Deep mines of diamonds, gems beyond compare,

Peace and contentment, joys the angels share.

But now the ghostly ing vine of fear

Writhes round the feeble ruin of the dear,

Dead days of long ago; and the fair pile

We loved as home has gone as flits a smile, Lighting some precious face a little day,

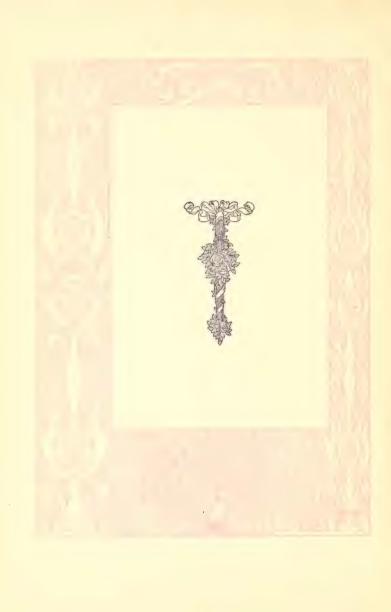
A moment bringing cheer, then swept away

Into the waste of Desting where blows

The hawling wind of Fate. And now who knows

- The meaning of it all? For we may dwell
- Ourselves hefore to-morrow by the well
- Where drink the gods neglected and aghast,
- Who walk in the Walhalla of the Past.

## CANTO III



Out of the houndless deep the tide of Time

Rolls billows of the Past all crowned with rime

Upon the shores where we were wont to play,

Counting the same old shells from day to day;

Counging beneath our sun-house on the strand.

Watching the wild waves running on the sand.

"What are they saying?" is the agelong cry:

"Live while you may, 'twill soon be time to die!"

- This is the answer that the reaseless waves
- Sing to pale dreamers from the ocean caues!
- This awe-inspiring anthem of the deep
- Drowns our brief joy and teaches us to weep!



## CANTO IV



The did not know what change the years would bring;
We reckoned home as but a little thing—

A place where lived a mother, loved awhile;

We did not know the pain beneath her smile, For she knew then what we know now, that Life

Is but a vampire bringing grief and strife

To all that love it and on pleasure bent

To see, to think, to live like those who went

- The pare before them! And did we not seek
- The same old pleasures of each weary week?
- We did not catch them in the luring race,
- But still we're weeping at the Wailingplace

- For those bright pleasures that shall nevermore
- Glow like a halo round the rusted door.
- The Iris gold we sought has gone the way
- Of all the earth; the gold we found was rlay;

- The pleasures raught, but roses; and their thorus,
- Doubled for each poor blossom, are the horns
- Of the Great Vilenma on which we hang
- Snared and torn and futile. And the harsh clang

- Of hells in the bleak temples of our dreams
- (With fallen idals stained with crimson streams
- Of our best blood) is dinning in our ears.

  Discordant tones of disappointing years.

### CANTO V



h! Hame! Pathetic trystingplace for all

Tired vagabonds who hear thy tender rall

In melodies of memory, and flee

Like homing doves from lands across the sea! Back from the halls of learning and of art,

Back with the spoils of many a foreign mart,

Back from the land where burning Sappho sung,

Back from the storied shrines where martyrs hung,

- Back from pagoda lands where false gods smile,
- Back from the desert sands along the Nile,
- Back from the trails where weary wanderlust
- Hath led earth's children made of weeping dust.

Haunted by dead dreams of childhood's day,

We come back home again to think and pray.

# CANTO VI



**B**ut prayer now fails us as our sad hearts turn

From the broken homestead to the stars that burn,

From the ruined refuge that we once called home

To the paths of planets that in far skies roam. We laughed at the heating of the weird toutout,

And the turning prayer-wheel in the temple's calm,

At the shrouded altars and the incensespice,

And the rose-red scars of dervish sacrifice, At the dark muezzin on his minaret,

And the sharp-fanged blood-rack where the fakirs fret,

At priestly unction and the tinkling bell

That chimes in Mass to save a soul from hell. And so in silence and with trembling hand

We grasp the remnant of the Thing God planned,

And weep that we rould think our prayers were heard Because we took them from a printed word:

The while the God who sees us waits and smiles
And Life, a trait'rous wanton, still beguiles.



# CANTO VII



In helpless failure from our prayers we pass

To thoughts like dewdrops shining on the grass

Of the fresh fields of Youth's bright morning. To!

Cround-splendor in the singing throngs there! And, oh!

- Claud-glary in the setting suns where we laughed
- Beside the rose-heaped fanes of life and quaffed
- The nectar of true Love. But to-day we drink
- With Socrates the hemlock, the while we think

- Apon the past. One sweet face so wondrous fair
- I see but dimly, framed round with golden hair,
- The two long braids, both tied with ribbons red;
- But her blue eyes are clased forever; her dead

- Lips nevermore shall kiss me. When but a lad
- I stood among the flowers and saw the sad,
- White face all cold and still. She was my young dream
- Of the beautiful, the good, the pure, that seem

- Like legends of another world. And, since then,
- No other love hath thrilled my heart; and when
- I get me hence to dwell among the throng
- Of the departed, I shall sing the song

We used to sing together until she,

Hearing my noice from 'neath the cypresstree,

Shall come and meet me on the Golden May

And sing to me as in the olden day.

### CANTO VIII



Health, Fame and Honor in Ambition's train,

Rolled up the hill and through the open plain

That knew no bounds in that eventful day

Of youthful hope. But now along the way

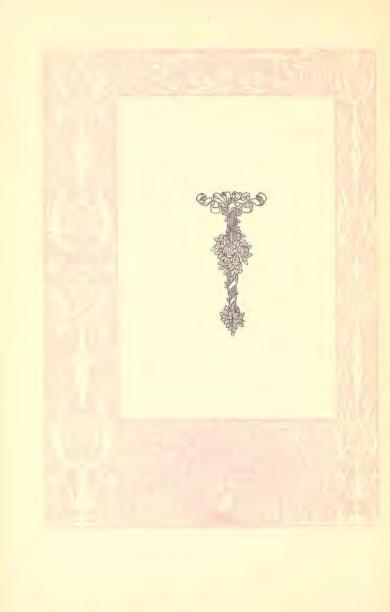
- Of life are shattered fragments scattered far.
- Of childhand's wagon hitched to distant star;
- The star itself has reased to shine on high;
- One wasted night it fell down from the sky;

And wistful, retrospective train of thought

Is wrecked where young Ambition rame to naught;

And Wealth, Fame, Honor, once our lustral lights,

Are cindered suns in skies of buried nights.



#### CANTO IX



For Time spells progress and we may not turn

The flow of evolution, though we yearn

For one more chance to take the other way;

The sparks fly upward and they will not stay.

The past is gone behind the fromning sky

Where day is night and night makes life a lie!

Farewell, vain pleasures, evanescent joys;

Earth's treasured pasts are Heau'n's discarded toys!

# CANTO X



ANITAS vanitatis

As life creeps on and it comes time to die!

For all the pictures painted in our dreams

Are washed away with tears. And now what seems The real, is but the ruin of the proud

Air-rastles which we built to pierce the cloud.

And far behind us are the grinning skulls

Of long-lost chances.

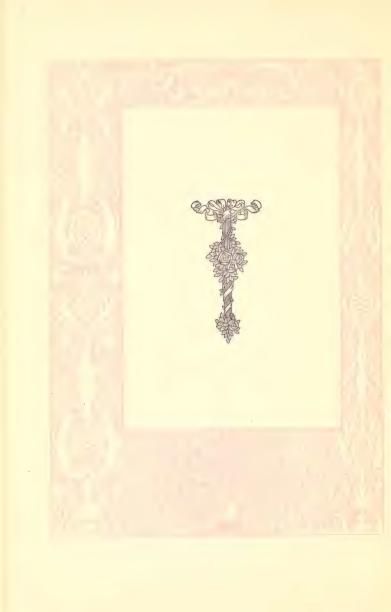
And the strain that

The earth-worn mortals at the riverside.

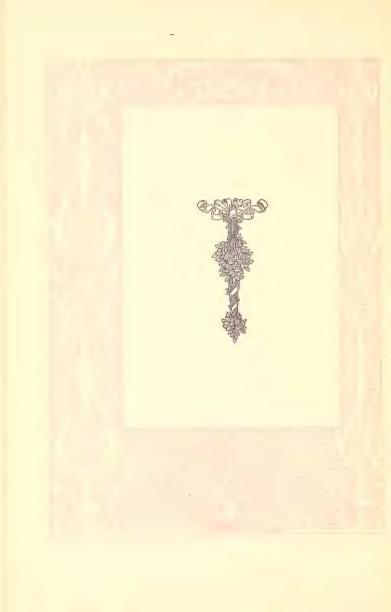
Is Love's own hopesong of the ones that died

And went before us to the Great Unknown

To meet the Maker on his Mystic Throne.



## CANTO XI



And now at the last milestone in the race,

Me pass the tambstane of departed grace

And reach the harbor on that silver lee

Whence every mortal must put out to sea.

And once we're launched upon the trackless waste,

Me'll sleep while sailing! There shall be no haste!

An unseen Pilot will direct our bark,

And, while we're sleeping, guide us in the dark;

And in the cradle of the rolling deep,

The waves will rock us—shall sleep and sleep!

We'll sail and sail upon the silent sea

And dream the dreams of immortality!

We'll dream of power, of happiness and gain

Not found 'mid bleeding bodies of the slain;

We'll dream of rest with God where all is well

And where the light of Truth life's myths dispel.

Despite our failures,
hope is born anew
To make us dream
again that dreams
come true!



